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PRACTICE NOTE

Exercise Evaluation: South Carolina Emergency Management Division's Exercise Evaluator Recruitment

PRACTICE

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) requires all agencies participating in an exercise to provide individuals who have in-depth knowledge of agency policies, plans, and procedures to serve as exercise evaluators. This practice guarantees that SCEMD has enough qualified evaluators on hand at an exercise, reduces the amount of time needed for evaluator training, and ensures that agencies implement recommendations contained in after-action reports.

DESCRIPTION

Traditionally, the Training Section of the SCEMD recruited individuals from agencies and localities not participating in the exercise to serve as evaluators. Prior to the exercise, SCEMD provided these evaluators with basic evaluator training as well as the standard operating procedures (SOPs) of participating agencies. SCEMD found that exercise participants often contested the evaluators' recommendations and observations, and refused to implement corrective actions.

In 2004, SCEMD instituted measures to address this problem. SCEMD requires all agencies participating in state-sponsored exercises to provide their own exercise evaluators. SCEMD does not dictate who serves as evaluators, but emphasizes that the individuals must possess in-depth knowledge about their respective agency's policies and procedures. Most evaluators are officials in either the planning or the operations branch of their agency. During the exercise, evaluators focus specifically on their respective agency and evaluate overall exercise performance. Evaluators must attend the final planning conference, a training session prior to the exercise, the post-exercise hot wash, the evaluator hot wash, and the after-action conference.

SCEMD successfully addressed several common exercise program management issues by requiring participating agencies to provide exercise evaluators. Participating agencies are now more respectful of the evaluators' determinations and are more likely to implement corrective actions. The SCEMD no longer struggles to have an adequate number of qualified evaluators on hand. The initiative also reduced the amount of resources needed for evaluator training.

CITATION

Batson, Steven. Manager, Weapons of Mass Destruction Training and Exercises, South Carolina Emergency Management Division. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 23 Jun and 07 Aug 2006.

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